

Smoky Mountain Region CQI Program Regional Structure

Regional Description

The Smoky Mountain Region is a rural region consisting of seven counties which includes Blount, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson and Sevier. The region surrounds Knoxville from the northeast to the southeast and borders the following regions in addition to Knox: Northeast and East.

Blount County makes up approximately 38% of the Region's custodial cases and has the largest number of staff. Hamblen County has the second highest percentage of the Region's custodial cases at 14%. Blount and Sevier both work approximately 22% of the region's total Child Protective Services referrals. They are the two highest counties followed by Jefferson at 15%.

Here in the Smoky Mountain Region there are approximately 219 regional employees and an additional 17 Central Office/support consultants stationed in county offices across the region. We have 27 Team Leaders, 5 Team Coordinators, a Deputy Regional Administrator and a Regional Administrator.

We are clustered into four geographic clusters with each cluster being assigned to a Team Coordinator. Since Blount is our largest county in terms of cases and staff, it is a stand-alone cluster. Another stand-alone cluster is comprised of Hamblen County and all of the region's Juvenile Justice Teams. The third cluster is comprised of Sevier and Cocke Counties. The fourth cluster consists of Jefferson, Claiborne and Grainger Counties. We also have a Regional Cluster that includes our Resource Parent Support Teams and Placement Unit.

The Smoky Mountain Region's economy contains a unique mixture of agriculture, industry, and hospitality/tourism services. Sevier County is home to Dollywood and draws large crowds from March to December. The Great Smoky Mountains are located in Blount, Sevier and Cocke Counties. This is another significant tourist attraction that boosts the local economy. Grainger County is largely agriculture and is known for its delicious Grainger County tomatoes. A report from the University of Tennessee finds that Hamblen County has the largest Hispanic population in Tennessee, outside of metropolitan areas. The study used 2010 U.S. Census data and concluded more than 6,700 Hispanics live in Hamblen County, but also noted that because of the way census information is gathered, that figure is probably low. The UT report said hiring practices of a few large firms like food processing industries and other low-skill, low-wage employers figure into the growth. However, it also noted that many Hispanics were attracted to the rural area by the quality of the schools.

Leadership CQI Workgroup(s)

The Regional Quality Practice Team meets the first Friday of each month. The Quality Practice Team (QPT) is a group that collaborates to help the region prioritize, coordinate, and implement professional development activities in order for progress to be made in meeting the goals of improved child and family outcomes. The work includes: the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data at the individual and regional levels; technical assistance and consultation to aid in forming strategies for and coordination of training, professional development, and transfer of learning activities to improve key

practice outcomes; and evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions. Regional teams play a critical role in connecting staff learning and development to practice improvement needs.

The last Thursday of each month a Regional Leadership Team meeting is held with supervisors and Central Office support staff serving the Region participating. The purpose of this meeting is to share information, build strong leadership, problem solve, employee recognition, review data and highlight regional successes.

The second and fourth Wednesday afternoon a Senior Leadership Meeting is held with participants being the Regional Administrator, Deputy Regional Administrator and the region's 5 Team Coordinators. Additional members such as the Fiscal Director and FCCR meet with the group once per month. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss policies & procedures, review DCS trends & data, discuss important DCS issues and concerns employee recognition, provide training opportunity, share information and develop strategic action plans for improvement.

CQI Workgroups

Juvenile Justice Circle: This circle is in the process of being revitalized and will include IL Specialist, JJ trainer, Mtn. View staff, Placement, and regional staff. The group meets the last Friday of each month at the Hamblen County DCS office at 1:30 p.m. Rosa Webb and Laura Reneau-Dockery are the facilitators. Keith Vincent is the scribe.

Permanency Circle: This circle is currently looking at transitioning for our older youth, especially those with challenging diagnoses and preparing for COA. The team meets every 3rd Friday of the month at 1:00 p.m. at the Jefferson County DCS office. Kevin Ledden and Laura Reneau-Dockery are the facilitators. The role of scribe rotates.

Excellence in Action Circle: This Ad Hoc Circle is a voluntary group established to focus on quality practice. The Team narrowed their focus to quality supervision. The region is in the process of completing 360 reviews on all supervisory staff. Rebecca Hendrich and Sherri Hale are co-facilitators for the group. Rebecca Hendrich is the scribe. With Rebecca taking on new duties she will no longer be available to participate. The Circle met at the Sevier County Library in the Wade Room. Meetings are set as needed.

Recruitment and Retention Circle: This team has developed the region's recruitment and retention plan and continuously seeks to improve support for kinship caregivers. The Circle meets the third Friday of each month at 1:30 at the Jefferson County DCS office. Kinship Coordinator Rebecca Garrison leads this circle. Ashley Doughty is the scribe.

Safety Circle: This group continues to review CPS stats, seek ways to improve response times and decrease overdues as well as consistency in application of policy. The team meets every 3rd Thursday of the month at the Jefferson County DCS office at 9:00 a.m. Kevin Ledden and Rebecca Lakins are the facilitators. Angela Ryan is the scribe.

Well-Being Circle: This circle continues to assess the triage process within the region and is also looking at a review process for non-custodial cases. The team is moving to a quarterly meeting that will be the

2nd Friday of the month at the Jefferson County DCS office at 11:00 a.m. Anne Little-Phillips is the facilitator and Sandra Sheets is the scribe.

Regional CQI Schedule

CQI Workgroup	Regular Meeting Time	Facilitator	Scribe
Quality Practice Team	1 st Friday of the month at 1:00 p.m. at Jefferson County DCS	Wendy Williamson	Laurie Barley
Well-Being Circle	2 nd Friday of the month at 11:00 a.m. at Jefferson County DCS	Anne Little-Phillips	Sandra Sheets
Safety Circle	3 rd Thursday of the month at 9:00 a.m. at the Jefferson County DCS Office	Kevin Ledden & Rebecca Lakins	Angela Ryan
Permanency Circle	3 rd Friday of the month at 1:00 p.m. at the Jefferson County DCS Office	Kevin Ledden & Laura Reneau-Dockery	Rotates
Retention & Recruitment Circle	3 rd Friday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at the Jefferson County DCS Office	Rebecca Garrison	Ashley Doughty
Juvenile Justice Circle	Last Friday of the month at 1:30 at Hamblen County DCS Office	Rosa Webb and Laura Reneau-Dockery	Keith Vincent
Excellence In Action Circle	Ad Hoc Team – as needed	Sherri Hale and Rebecca Hendrich	Rebecca Hendrich